

# Social Distancing Guidelines for North Carolina State Forests

North Carolina State Forests are a treasured part of North Carolina's landscape, providing public access to some of our State's most beautiful features. In recent days, many State Forests have experienced a surge in visitation two and three times greater than normal visitation for this time of year. For the safety of our visitors and staff and in support of social distancing, the N.C. Forest Service is implementing common sense safety measures at every State Forest. This is being done to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure our State Forests remain beautiful places for families and visitors to enjoy recreation and respite. We urge visitors to be partners in this effort.

As we continue to monitor the state's response to COVID-19, additional safety measures may be implemented, affecting public access to State Forests.

**For updated information about COVID-19 impacts to N.C. Forest Service operations, visit [ncforests.service.gov/COVID19.htm](https://ncforests.service.gov/COVID19.htm) and follow us on Facebook.**

On a brighter note, the great outdoors has not been canceled. Fresh air can help boost your immune system and provide you with much needed reprieve from extended periods of time spent indoors. We encourage you to take advantage of setting out on a trail and exploring the Forest. Just remember to follow social distancing guidelines to help us keep forests open as safe places during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Here are some helpful tips for visitors to State Forests:

- Pay close attention to guidance in your community before heading outside. Acknowledge any guidelines, restrictions or closures mandated by your local or state government.
- Expect closures. Use the restroom before leaving home.
- Avoid times and places of high use. Visit early in the day or in the middle of the week.
- Keep hiking groups to three people or less.
- Per CDC coronavirus guidelines, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from everyone at trailheads, parking lots and on the trails.
- If you are approaching others on the trail, safely step to the side to allow at least 6 feet of distance for passing.
- Do not take group photos that violate social distancing guidelines.
- Do not share your camera with others to take photos for you.
- Keep your dog leashed in the interest of safety and social distancing.
- As much as possible, stick to activities and areas that are within your regular routine and take it easy. Although Forest staff remain available to assist visitors, please be aware that staffing adjustments may increase response times for inquiries and on-site assistance.
- Be considerate and kind to others because we are all in this together.

